

might see the administration's military reductions as a signal that they no longer need to meet their commitments to spend 2 percent of their GDP. Now, remember when the previous President, President Trump, talked to our allies to start belying up and participating. NATO—those nations are our friends, but they are not coming to the level that they are going to have to do to carry their end of it.

Don't forget—whether we are facing Russia, China, or other adversaries in other parts of the world, operating jointly with our allies and partners is a core part of our ability to deter conflict in multiple theaters, but it requires investment.

Take the refueling support we provided for our French allies in Mali—6 million pounds of fuel to allow the French to take on that critical counterterrorism mission and support their troops on the ground. It would have cost us billions to do this mission by ourselves. That is why we need the allies. The same goes for Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, and elsewhere. A good portion of our defense budget pays for our military to support our allies and partners so that we don't have to send our own troops over there and our allies can do it for us. It gives us insight into its operations.

So do you see what would happen if our military's ability to posture forward and stay ready is choked by inadequate defense spending? Our allies and partners would suffer, not improve, and the United States would end up spending more money for less security. This goes directly against the Biden administration's stated goals.

Thinking that alliances and partnerships can substitute for U.S. military capability and capacity is wishful thinking. It is illogical. That strategy will harm our national security. As former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said, "Throughout history, we see nations with allies thrive and nations without allies wither." If we want to win against our strategic competitors, it will take both a strong, fully resourced military, as well as strong alliances and partnerships. Let's be clear. One is not an alternative for the other. You got to have both.

So it is clear then that we need our allies. So how do we maintain this mutual relationship with robust defense spending of 3 to 5 percent real growth? That is what it calls for right here. This year, we should have a 3- to 5-percent increase, and the President's budget actually came out with a net decrease. That is why this whole thing is so important.

Just this morning, we had a hearing, and we had one of the authors of this book. I asked him the same question. I said: This was put together back in 2018. Is it still accurate today? He said: Yes, it is. And it doesn't even increase enough to keep up with inflation.

So Eric Edelman—he is one of the co-sponsors of the NDS that we are referring to here that has been our blueprint for 5 years now. The report said it best in an article this week by Eric Edelman. He said in this article:

[I]t remains a fact that allies and adversaries will see the U.S. commitment to defense as a crucial benchmark for assessing U.S. willingness and ability to succeed at long-term competition with its authoritarian adversaries.

He continued, and this is Eric Edelman:

A tough declaratory policy without adequate military means to reinforce it is a recipe for disaster, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.

So I would just say this: President Biden walks the walk, but when it comes to supporting our allies, they don't do it, and I and many others know that it is meaningless without a strong defense budget to back it up.

And we need a higher topline. We need a higher topline. It is going to have to be somewhere in the range that was put together by a group of Democrats and Republicans that outlined what we have to do for America to survive. So we need a higher topline, and we are going to end up getting a higher topline.

With that, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:22 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, May 12, 2021, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate May 11, 2021:

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CYNTHIA MINETTE MARTEN, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF EDUCATION.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ANDREA JOAN PALM, OF WISCONSIN, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.